



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING

VOL. XX

MARCH, 1920

No. 6

EDITORIAL COMMENT

PLANS FOR CENTRAL HEADQUARTERS

Almost from the beginning of our organization life, the need for central headquarters has been talked of, first by one group of members, and then by another, but there has never seemed to be a time to begin when all the conditions were favorable.

At a meeting in October last of the joint boards of directors of our three national organizations, Miss Noyes was authorized to appoint a committee to consider ways and means by which the organizations could take over the management of the Bureau of Information, established at Red Cross Headquarters in New York as a war emergency. This committee submitted a report at the directors' meeting in January, which provides for central headquarters in New York City for the American Nurses' Association, the League and the Public Health Nurses' Association, in coöperation with the Bureau of Nursing of the Red Cross, the bureau of information being only one of a number of activities to be embodied in the plan.

This report, an abridged copy of which is found in this *Journal*, has been submitted to the directors of all the state associations with the request that delegates sent to the Atlanta Convention shall be ready to discuss and if possible to vote, either for or against this plan. The committee's report carries with it an annual budget of approximately \$19,000.00, but does not state how this amount of money is to be raised. It is understood, however, that the Red Cross would continue to meet some portion of the maintenance of the Bureau of Information.

There is much to be said in support of the scheme as devised. There is no question but that there is, as we are now working, great duplication in the work of the three organizations, both of personnel and of money. New York is one of the great nursing centers of the country, perhaps the greatest in numbers, both of training schools and of individual nurses. The Public Health Nurses' Association already has its headquarters there, and the Red Cross Bureau of

Information would only need to change its street address, its value having been demonstrated fully to thousands of nurses returning from overseas, and to hospitals and organizations needing nurses for every kind of position.

The plan was drawn by Miss M. A. Nutting, Chairman, Department of Nursing and Health, Teachers College, New York City; Elsie M. Lawler, Mary S. Gardner, Katharine Tucker, Minnie H. Ahrens and Clara D. Noyes, ex-officio.

While the majority of the joint boards of directors are in favor of this plan, there was some objection from those who see in it certain features that would seem to threaten our professional liberty in the long future, such as might be the case if we were to become affiliated with any organization larger and more influential than our own, and who for that reason see in coöperation with the Red Cross, in establishing central headquarters, a certain danger, not because of objection to the Red Cross itself, more than to any other dominating society.

Another objection was that there would not be sufficient time for consideration of the plan by the state associations before the Atlanta meetings and that we have no funds on hand for such an enterprise.

As we see this matter, central headquarters, to be a success must have the backing and coöperation of the nurses of all the states, as well as their financial support. It must be located *where the great majority of the nurses want it*. There is much to be said in favor of New York, and one of the suggestions made in the plan is, that having established headquarters there, we shall immediately begin decentralization, following the lines of the organization of the Red Cross, with branch offices at a number of points over the country. Apart from the question of expense, the establishment of such headquarters, with branches, would be a very simple matter. Is there any way by which headquarters and branches can be made self supporting? Would we not be losing some of our professional freedom by entering into partnership with any overshadowing organization for the sake of its financial aid? Already the Red Cross, since the war, has become the largest employer of nurses in the world. Let us not forget the wise old saying that "the man who pays the piper has the right to call the tune." This is not a matter to get excited over. It is a matter for the majority to settle, only let every one understand the plan, and be prepared to vote on it intelligently at the meeting in Atlanta.

It is perfectly possible to work out a scheme for central headquarters on a more simple basis than that proposed, but it will be not a vanishing expense, but a constantly increasing one, and will

call for either a definite tax upon all the states, which will mean all the members, or the acceptance of financial aid from outside sources. We have passed the time when we expect our members to give their services for nothing, or even for a modest pittance, as was done by the earlier group when some big proposition had to be put over. If we ask certain of our members to give up lucrative positions to carry on the work at these central points, we must be prepared to pay them, and salaries, as well as office rents, have to be met month by month.

Our two most important projects began in a very small way. The Department of Nursing and Health at Columbia was maintained during its first years by personal contributions from members of the League, and later the A. N. A. joined forces with the League for this purpose, until the work attracted so much attention that the department was liberally endowed. The *Journal* was established by contributions, or we might say loans, from a small group of nurses who gave the use of their money for ten years without interest, and until this year, the 20th, the *Journal* has received a great deal of gratuitous service in one way or another.

If we have a sufficient number of members who are ready to assume the financial backing of Central Headquarters, with such help as the states will give, then let us by all means go ahead. We need branches at several points in the country, and we need them now, but let us keep in mind that the affairs of every profession are managed from within its own ranks.

Further details of the plan will be given in all its bearings at the Atlanta convention.

THE JOURNAL TABLE AT THE ATLANTA CONVENTION

This year our book table at the Atlanta convention will be managed in a somewhat different manner than formerly, and we hope with less confusion. Each publisher's books will be grouped together and placarded, and we will have printed lists of books, under subjects, for distribution to the members present, so that a superintendent, for instance, wanting to see the books on dietetics, will find under that heading the names, not only of the books, but of the publishers in whose group they will be found.

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE CENTENNIAL

Newspaper publicity has already been given to the arrangements being made by the National Organization for Public Health Nursing and other groups for the celebration of the Florence Nightingale centennial. An outline for a series of tableaux portraying events in the life of Florence Nightingale has been arranged in such a way that amateurs can easily produce them.

The newly organized Central Council for Nursing Education in Chicago has offered a prize of \$500.00 for the best three-act play by an American author, based on incidents in the life of Florence Nightingale. Any one of our readers wishing further information may write to the headquarters of the National Organization for Public Health Nursing at 156 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION OF LITTLE VALUE

It seems incredible that in this enlightened age a woman, not a nurse, should be able, again and again, to pass herself off on hospital boards and others as a reputable graduate nurse and hospital administrator of experience, but such a case has just now been called to our attention. We were reminded of something that happened in our younger days, when making application for a hospital position and showing with great pride a number of autographed letters from distinguished people which we had felt sure would be guaranty enough of our responsibility. The gentleman (the late Dr. John S. Billings), after glancing casually at the signatures, handed them back and said, "I don't care anything about letters. Formal letters have no value. Anybody can get them. What I want you to do is to give me the names of a number of people who have known you for some time in different ways and under different conditions, and let me make my own investigation." We have found this advice invaluable as we have come down the years, and never trust to written credentials that are handed to us by unknown applicants. Like Dr. Billings we have come to realize that "anybody can get them." We know that it is a very difficult matter to refuse to give them. Hospitals in need of people to fill important executive positions should make very thorough investigation, not only of the capabilities, but of the moral status of any one applying for such positions.

WAR NURSES, ATTENTION

Under the new amendments to the War Risk Insurance Act which became a law on December 24, 1919, nurses as well as ex-service men, are provided with more liberal benefits. The insurance that has been allowed to lapse may be reinstated within eighteen months after the date of discharge. Applications for blanks should be made to the War Risk Insurance Bureau, Washington, D. C., giving name and address, with date of discharge from the service.

The United States Public Health Service is now operating forty-three hospitals for the care of discharged, disabled soldiers, sailors, marines, and war nurses, and we understand that many hundred nurses who were more or less disabled as a result of war service are being cared for by some one of the government department hospitals

or the Red Cross. In all over 10,000 ex-service men and nurses are being treated in this way.

THE ATLANTA CONVENTION

During the week from April 12th, through the 17th, our three national organizations will convene in Atlanta, Georgia. This will be the twenty-fifth meeting of the League; the seventh of the National Organization for Public Health Nursing; and the twenty-second of the American Nurses' Association. But although this is the twenty-second convention of the last named, it is its first biennial meeting, as its conventions now come biennially, instead of annually.

The American Nurses' Association met last in 1918, in Cleveland; it will not meet again until 1922, in some place to be determined,—and it may be interesting to our readers to know that all invitations for 1922, to the present time, have been from western states,—Washington, Minnesota, and Wisconsin.

As there is now so long an interval between conventions, and as the meetings are always full of interest and inspiration, and as matters of great importance to the whole profession are to be discussed, we urge every nurse who can possibly do so to attend the convention at Atlanta. The programme of each organization will be found in our news columns. If there are subjects of interest that are not represented there, nurses are urged to hand in requests for round tables, which will be arranged whenever possible, in response to a definite request.

The meetings are so timed that the weather will not be too warm for enjoyment, the southern nurses are ready to extend every hospitality, and there is always inspiration for better work after such a gathering.

THE MEMORIAL FUND

Our last plea for the Bordeaux Fund, before closing our pages on the 15th, is taken from communications received from our readers.

As the Nightingale Memorial Fund campaign comes to a close, with less than half the desired amount subscribed, to those of us whose great privilege it was to be in France during and after the war, come memories of devastated cities and towns; of women working in the fields to take the places of the men who have gone on, or who, perforce, sit idly by; of little children whose very physical and mental lives were stunted beyond repair through years of untold suffering. We recollect those little groups of blinded soldiers who went about together, finding comradeship in similarity of affliction, and forgetting, in this comradeship, their sensitiveness to pitying eyes, which unseeing they feel. We remember in particular one blind

man who, in addition to his blindness, wore an empty left sleeve, on which was sewn that black band which told of the brother who had not lived through the struggle, and which marked a bond of sympathy with nearly every other French soldier we saw, and with those ever-present black robed women. We also recall a group of three men cheerfully stomping along the Champs Elysees, in Paris, with one human leg and five peg-legs between them, and the truth to tell, the one with the human leg kept a pace behind the others, who seemed to make better time than he.

The war is over, but have we forgotten that there is in France just one young man in twenty who has escaped death or bodily injury; and have we read reports of the thousands of soldiers in France who in 1919 succumbed to injuries received during the war, many of whom might have survived and lived useful lives had the nursing facilities of France been equal to the situation?

It comes as a great privilege to us, as Americans, who have scarcely felt the blight of war, to be allowed to contribute to an enterprise which, through the years, will stand as a constant memory and tribute to those of our number who crossed the seas, not to return again, and which will also through the years be a means of furnishing to France that sort of nursing service and education which represents our highest American ideals and which has heretofore been unknown there.

How to keep alive the splendid memories of those who died in our service is a question which the nurses of America are answering in their support of the Memorial Fund for the Florence Nightingale School of Nurses at Bordeaux, France.

Our energies and resources, you say, are needed to solve the terrific problems facing our profession here at home? France must build bridges and untangle barbed-wire as well as meet economic readjustment. She must also restore the exhausted strength of her population. Nurses can help bring back the national vitality by introducing the common laws of health. Already the gift of an estate has brought nearer to realization the ideal which inspired Dr. Hamilton in founding this training school at Bordeaux. Should not this great solitary pioneer work be supported?

True, our own training schools may be in need, also, of pupils, of instructors, of equipment. France, however, has only this one institution on modern lines, where half the students pay their board to obtain the privilege of entering our profession. Is there not a purged international spirit among nurses all over the world which makes the forward steps of one national unit a gain for all?

With the coming of spring we shall commemorate the day when, one hundred years ago, Florence Nightingale was born in the high-walled rambling Villa Columbaia near the Porta Roma of the "City of Flowers." On sunny orchard slopes of France, May will also bring crocuses and daffodils to the well-ordered graves of over one hundred American nurses. Support of the Florence Nightingale Fund gives a two-fold opportunity,—to honor the memory of our own "heroic dead," and to repay in small part our debt to the Lady-in-Chief who said:

"Let each Founder train as many in her spirit as she can. Then the pupils will in their turn be Founders also."

"During the war I was stationed at a large base hospital near Bordeaux and I had the privilege of hearing Dr. Hamilton speak on the cause so dear to her heart. I also visited her little hospital in Bordeaux, a three-story corner building, very old, but oh so neat. Most of the nurses in training could speak English and all were from the best class of people. The curriculum is complete and the text books and note books are the best I have ever seen. If I remember rightly, the hospital contains about sixty beds, and has an out-patient department conducted by one of the graduates, also a school and visiting nurse. Dr. Hamilton will be so proud of her new school and France needs something like this to awaken her to her great need of trained nurses."

THE INTERSTATE SECRETARY

The Interstate Secretary has spent all of February in Massachusetts, where she had engagements to speak in many places. On account of the storms which have been prevalent there, it has been impossible for her to go to all the towns planned for, and her first week of March will be spent in Massachusetts, after which she will go to New Hampshire to be present at the state meeting, and will spend the last half of the month in Connecticut.

She will turn west after the Atlanta meetings, going first to North Dakota, then into Illinois and Kansas. She will finish her year on July 31st, and unless the treasuries of the League, the A. N. A. and the JOURNAL have been miraculously filled before that date, her services will then have to be discontinued.

Cities lying along the route, or adjoining states, are urged to avail themselves of the opportunity to hear Miss Eldredge before it is too late.